

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

28 March 1968

Mr. James M. Mitchell
The Brookings Institution
1775 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W.,
Washington, D. C. 20036

Dear Mr. Mitchell:

You recently requested an evaluation of the Conference for Federal Science Executives on Public Affairs which was held March 3-8, 1968 at Williamsburg, Virginia. My response follows the outline which you provided.

Having attended Brookings' Conference on Business Operations about a year ago, I was familiar with the general conference format, and from the reading material I felt I had a reasonable grasp of content of the conference. I had anticipated that some speakers would be provocative and challenging and others, who might be equally well versed, would be primarily informative. This turned out to be the case.

Although the scope of the conference was certainly satisfactory, I believe there was an overemphasis on current problems and inadequate development of the historical aspects of economic, sociological, and political background. Especially in the first session the movement through the "American Heritage" by Dr. Chase to current problems seemed far too rapid to me. Perhaps because of extensive newspaper and other communications media coverage, I failed to find the poverty and dissent aspects very interesting or stimulating. In addition, I found no rationale for such a disproportionate concentration on Negro problems when, for example, the speakers were saying that this group comprises only about 20% of the poverty problem. Something like "A Social Scientist Views the Scene--Past and Present" might have made at least two sessions somewhat more rewarding.

Gus Tyler and de Solla Price were outstanding -- Tyler because of his obvious broad gauge sensitivity and competence, and de Solla Price because of his special insight into the science business itself.

In addition, both of these speakers seemed to communicate especially well and were very quick and witty. I had the impression that, for some unknown reason, Professor Higbee was simply scared to death. He was rather grim and failed to "act as a catalyst." I am at a loss to understand this in view of his obvious expertise. If I were to list the speakers in order, I would start with Tyler, then de Solla Price, then Harold Chase based on his discussion of the Constitution, etc., rather than his presentation on "American Heritage", then Herb Striner and his presentation on "Economics and Public Policy." The others, except Margenau, sort of clump at this point with Higbee on the bottom. During his presentation, Dr. Margenau remarked that in the future he believed he would eliminate some of the early material and concentrate on the philosophical aspects of his talk, and I completely concur with this idea. Further, I think that Margenau would be particularly effective in an evening presentation when everyone was in a somewhat more philosophical frame of mind. In contrast to the rest of the presentations, however, this really deals with the functional science business. As a group the speakers tended to be too much on the scholarly side.

If I were conducting a similar conference, I would be delighted if I were able to do half as well as the Brookings Institution did with this conference. However, I would give serious thought to seeing if I couldn't get Professor Carroll Quigley of Georgetown to talk about something like the "Historical Context of Technological Change." He might turn out to be a bit too sporty but he could never be accused of being dull, and he has the same sort of enthusiasm for this subject which both Price and Tyler exhibited for their subjects. I covered subject matter in the preceding paragraph, and I feel the method of presentation was about right for a group of this size.

Although the Manual of Readings was good, it didn't address the various discussion topics as well as the Manual of Readings for Business Operations, nor did I feel that the readings were as interesting or comprehensive. I had not read the Federalist Papers before, and found them particularly interesting. I was subsequently disappointed when Chase did not discuss this work to any extent.

I found the daily schedule just right, and the facilities excellent.

Personally I would have preferred a mixed bag of attendees: I have nothing against scientists and engineers of course, but such a group tends to have similar viewpoints towards issues, subjects,

etc. I missed the informal discussions with people in other disciplines which I had enjoyed very much in the Business Operations Conference. The fact of the matter is that scientists and engineers as a group aren't the liveliest people in the world.

There is no doubt that such a conference as this has a substantial impact on anyone's thinking and actions, both immediate and long term. I don't know whether this constitutes "achievement" but there is no doubt in my mind that many of my decisions will be at least incrementally better because of the broader understanding which such an exposure provides.

High marks to Harry Seymour and his associates for a very carefully planned and well executed conference. I hope my brevity will not lead to any misunderstandings as I have been rather frank: please call on me if I can assist in any way to make a good thing better.

Sincerely,

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Special Assistant to the
Deputy Director for Science and Technology

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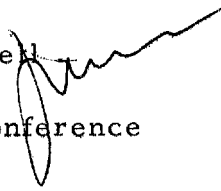
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March 15, 1968

MEMORANDUM

TO: Participants in the Conference for Federal Science
Executives, March 3-8, 1968

FROM: James M. Mitchell 

SUBJECT: Evaluation of Conference

Enclosed is a list of questions about the Conference held in Williamsburg, Virginia, from March 3 to 8, 1968. Your frank reactions to these questions will be very much appreciated and will help us in planning future conferences. I would be grateful if you would send me your comments by April 12.

We have arranged for you and the other Conference participants to receive, on a complimentary basis, the Brookings' Research Reports that are issued during the coming year. I hope you find them useful and interesting.

Enclosure

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION
Advanced Study Program

Evaluation of Conference

1. What were your expectations in coming to the Conference? What did you expect would occur and what results did you think would be achieved? To what extent and in what ways were these expectations fulfilled or not fulfilled?
2. Was the substantive scope of the Conference satisfactory? Which subjects were most valuable to you? Which were least valuable? Was there too much of the same thing?
3. Which speakers were most valuable and effective? Which were least valuable and effective? What characteristics tended to distinguish the former from the latter?
4. Accepting the objectives stated in the "Foreword" to the Program and assuming that you were responsible for planning a conference to meet these objectives for the same kind of group in which you participated, what changes would you make in:
 - A. The subject-matter?
 - B. The speakers?
 - C. The methods?
5. What is your assessment of each of the following aspects of the Conference?
 - A. The manual of readings
 - B. The length of the Conference
 - C. The daily schedule
 - D. The physical arrangements, facilities and location
 - E. The general composition of the participant group
6. What were the main achievements of the Conference? What were its effects on you as an individual and as an executive?
7. Please add any additional comments or suggestions not covered by the above-mentioned items.